

**Title of Session:** WriteTalk - Sharing Best Practices in Writing  
**Moderator:** Sandra Shattuck  
**Title of File:** 20060511writetalk  
**Date:** May 11, 2006

Room: WriteTalk Group

**FredK:** I am still thinking PURPLE from the last meeting

**SandraS** chuckles while she admires Fred's memory

**SusanKI:** I guess I missed something . . . "PURPLE?"

**SandraS:** We did prompts last time, Susan

**SandraS:** and the first one was PURPLE

**SandraS:** I had a great time writing with everyone

**BJB2:** me too! As a matter of fact, I suggested that you lead one of the fun events during the Festival and do that, Sandy.

**SandraS:** kewl...I'd love to do that bj

**DavidWe:** Hi, Fred. Welcome

**BJB2:** Welcome to today's WriteTalk discussion.

**SandraS** waves to Heather

**HeatherBu:** Hi, Sandra

**BJB2:** We usually start all the discussions with introductions. Please let Sandy know who her audience is.

**BJB2:** I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania

**SandraS:** I teach literature/writing in Alabama

**HeatherBu:** I'm a middle school Tech teacher in Texas

**DavidWe:** I'm in New Jersey where I am one of the HelpDesk volunteers and official virtual bagel procurer for Tapped In

**SandraS** munches a sesame seed 7-grain bagel

**SusanKI:** I teach Business, Computer Applications & Office Technology at a California Community College--currently, I'm in a fully-online Master of Arts in Educational Technology through Azusa Pacific University

**FredK:** I Push Literacy in Oklahoma. It's tutoring nonreaders.

**SandraS:** wonderful!

**DavidWe** hopes Fred is pushing with all three arms

**SandraS:** great variety of teaching

**SandraS:** welcome to WriteTalk

**SandraS:** I usually begin with a quick introduction of the National Writing Project

**SandraS:** and then we get to it!

**SandraS:** I'm at Alabama A&M University in Huntsville AL

**DavidWe:** Are there OTHER "National" writing projects, Sandra?

**DavidWe** . o O ( other countries? )

**SandraS:** not yet...

**SandraS:** we are one of 190 National Writing Project sites

**SandraS:** housed at universities

**SandraS:** usually Education departments or English depts.

**SandraS:** and catering to primarily k-12 teachers

**SandraS:** NWP has been around for about 30 years

**SandraS:** and is a fantastic professional development organization with three main tenets

**SandraS:** teachers are the best teachers of other teachers

**SandraS:** teachers teach writing more effectively when they improve their own writing

**SandraS:** and writing is a great teaching tool across all subject areas

**SandraS:** I'll give you the URL in a sec

**SandraS:** and there's a map on top of the home page

**SandraS:** where you can locate a WP site near you

**SandraS:** after I give you the URL, take a couple minutes to check out the site and then come back here

**SandraS:** <http://www.writingproject.org>

**SandraS** left the room (signed off).

**BJB2** . o O ( now we need to figure out why Sandy lost her connection! )

**SusanKl:** please remind me how to /waves?

**BJB2:** unstable weather in the area here. Sandy may be having similar weather where she is

**BJB2:** Susan, start the line with a colon followed by the action :waves

**BJB2** waits for Susan to wave

**SusanKl** smiles

**BJB2** cheers...even better!

**SusanKl:** thank you

**BJB2:** while we wait for Sandy to return, I have a sort of question for the group

**FredK** . o O ( at the bottom of the actions is a help )

**BJB2** . o O ( good thing this isn't language arts )

**HeatherBu** listens to BJ

**SusanKl:** thank you, Fred

**FredK:** YW

**BJB2:** last time we had writetalk, Sandy led us through Blitz Prompts...very fast word prompts with timed responses

**SusanKl:** gee, does everyone see the list I see from going to Help?

**BJB2:** we had a really cool time and enjoyed the experience very much

**BJB2:** no, Susan, we don't see that

**SusanKI:** good!

**BJB2:** . o O ( although we know now )

**SandraS** joined the room.

**BJB2:** anyway, the Tapped In Festival is in the planning stages

**SandraS:** oh, finally!

**SusanKI:** welcome back Sandra

**HeatherBu:** Susan, I had a panic attack the first time I tried it

**FredK:** I'm still Purple sensitive

**BJB2** cheers...welcome back, Sandy

**JudyTh** joined the room.

**BJB2:** Hi, Judy. Welcome

**SusanKI:** Hi Judy

**JudyTh:** hi

**SandraS:** firefox problems...again...had to switch computers

**SandraS:** Hi, Judy.

**SusanKI:** Judy teaches PE at a high school, I invited her.

**SandraS:** We're just getting started

**BJB2:** I suggested to the festival planning committee that Sandy do another similar activity for the festival

**SandraS:** Great, Susan!

**SandraS:** Did you explain the activity, BJ?

**HeatherBu:** Wonderful idea, BJ

**BJB2:** the theme for this year's festival is Sustaining Professional Development Online

**SandraS:** great theme!

**SandraS:** did everyone have a chance to look at the NWP site?

**BJB2:** Sandy likes the idea. I'm wondering if the writetalk group can help her develop ideas that would tie into the theme

**SusanKI:** briefly, don't want to miss what happens in here

**SandraS:** hmmm...great idea, BJ.

**FredK:** Lots going on at NW

**SandraS:** Yes, Fred.

**SandraS:** Lots of resources on the website

**SandraS:** the main program for each of the 190 sites is the Summer Institute

**BJB2:** no, Sandy, I only briefly described Blitz Prompts

**SandraS:** which will take place all over the country

**SandraS:** thanks, BJ!

**SandraS:** teachers get together and study, write, share ideas

**SandraS:** the organization absolutely believes that the voices of teachers need to be heard

**SandraS:** to that end, NWP published The Quarterly

**SandraS:** which is online

**SandraS:** fantastic resource for ideas about writing

**JudyTh:** teachers being heard has helped in writing across the curriculum

**SandraS:** NWP also publishes several books

**SandraS:** yes, very much so, Judy

**JudyTh:** there is a lot of resistance with non English teachers implementing writing

**SandraS:** and there's an excellent new brochure on the website about how much Americans want writing to be taught

**JudyTh:** now with the push for expressive writing

**SandraS:** yes, Judy...have you had experience with that?

**JudyTh:** it relaxes the other teachers to use writing as a tool

**JudyTh:** and not TEACH writing

**SandraS:** that's actually a good segue into my topic tonight

**SandraS:** Exactly!

**SandraS:** So my question to all of us is, first of all...

**SandraS:** how do we each use writing to learn...for ourselves....

**SandraS:** how do we write and learn through our writing?

**JudyTh:** outlines

**SandraS:** I wanted to start there before going to the classroom

**SandraS:** I'll start...I use a journal to learn what I'm feeling, thinking...to discover my own ideas

**SandraS** thinks she hears whispers somewhere

**SandraS:** ok, let's back up

**SusanKI:** I reinforce what I have learned by writing about it.

**SandraS:** aha!

**SandraS:** what kind of writing do you do?

**SandraS:** to reinforce what you've learned?

**FredK:** Why is writing such a chore then?

**JudyTh:** I outline information when I'm reading/studying information

**HeatherBu:** I write to help myself organize what I'm thinking.

**SandraS:** ok, so Judy uses outline to study...

**JudyTh:** I also use lists to help me remember what I have to do for the day

**SandraS:** what do you write, Heather?

**SandraS:** ok, great, lists...mnemonic device...can't function without 'em!

**SusanKl:** sorry, telephone...currently I read, then write "posts" in our Master's courses.

**HeatherBu:** Sometimes just free-writing, sometimes dreadful poetry, sometimes more along the lines of proposals...

**SandraS:** so writing is in response to reading, Susan?

**SusanKl:** yes

**DavidWe . o O** ( oooh, dreadful poetry! )

**SandraS:** thanks...

**JudyTh:** I like poetry, David

**JudyTh** smiles

**SandraS** hears Fred's question reverberating against the ceiling

**HeatherBu . o O** ( David, don't be a pill, please...it took courage for me to admit that )

**SandraS:** "Why is writing such a chore?"

**JudyTh:** chore for our students?

**DavidWe:** I like poetry, too

**SandraS** knows David loves 'dreadful' poetry cuz it's usually not dreadful!

**SandraS:** I'm assuming Fred meant a chore for us...can you clarify, Fred?

**DavidWe** admires Heather's courage and often thinks of her in the same context as Annie Oakley

**FredK:** I find generating words a problem

**SusanKl:** writing is a chore especially for ESL students

**FredK:** Basic literacy, too

**SandraS:** yes, so let's brainstorm here

**SusanKI:** I agree, basic literacy is very important

**JudyTh:** that's why expressive writing is so important, writing just to write

**HeatherBu** challenges David with fountain pens at twenty paces

**SandraS:** how could we use writing for ESL students and basic literacy and technology..these are some of the classes we teach in this group

**SandraS:** I agree, Judy

**SusanKI** watches the duel

**DavidWe** has many fountain pens and ink cartridges - just to let Heather know who she's up against

**SandraS** takes out her ink jet cartridge...

**FredK:** I used bigger and more complicated words when I was in High School many years ago.

**SandraS:** Let me give you an example...

**SandraS:** we just had a technology workshop for our writing project folks

**JudyTh:** give the students a topic and have them write for 5 minutes about it, non stop

**SandraS:** the idea was to help teachers who teach writing use more technology

**SandraS:** but you could look at this exercise the other way

**SandraS:** use writing to help teach technology

**FredK:** Tech manuals--yuck

**SandraS:** this exercise might work with the other groups here

**SandraS:** it's called Authors' Gallery

**SandraS:** and it uses Word and the WordArt section of MS Word

**SandraS:** a digital picture

**SandraS:** and students simply take a picture of themselves

**SandraS:** put it into a Word document

**SandraS:** then use WordArt to do a title

**SandraS:** then write something

**SusanKl:** or use technology as a tool to assist with writing?

**SandraS:** an introduction of themselves, perhaps

**SandraS:** yes, so in this case...

**FredK:** Been trying that. My aim is bad.

**SandraS:** the fun of the picture, playing with WordArt

**SandraS:** is all part of the writing

**SandraS:** so students are writing AND using technology

**SandraS:** am I making any sense?

**JudyTh:** especially if there is no "grade" involved

**SusanKl:** it gets the students involved and interested

**JudyTh:** students relax and write freely

**SandraS:** agreed, Judy and Susan

**JudyTh:** what they want

**HeatherBu:** Yes, Sandra. I think it's an idea I'll try next week.

**JudyTh:** and not what they think the teacher wants

**SandraS:** this exercise has been used for a Parents' Night

**SandraS:** the pieces are left on the monitor

**SandraS:** and parents can add comments at the bottom

**JudyTh:** that sounds fun

**SandraS:** it's also been used in college classroom as an icebreaker

**HeatherBu . o O ( what fun! )**

**SandraS:** so it's flexible

**JudyTh:** get parents involved in writing too

**SusanKl:** yes, it sure does sound successful

**SandraS:** yes, exactly, Judy

**SusanKl:** icebreaker! what a great idea!

**SandraS:** so for ESL learners and literacy learners, there's focus on the visual, shapes, art

**SandraS:** and that helps with the writing

**SusanKl:** reaches many of the multiple intelligences . . .

**JudyTh:** just going to say that Susan

**SandraS:** agreed, Susan

**SusanKl** smiles

**SandraS:** this idea comes from Deb Martin at Rowan University, who designed it when she was a middle school teacher

**FredK:** I think I will try that icebreaker with the PCLC\_Grp

**SandraS:** came out of a teacher meeting when they needed something for parents' night

**SusanKl:** PCLC\_Grp?

**SandraS:** Fred, you'll have to let us know how it goes

**FredK:** Push County Literacy Council here

**FredK:** I invite anyone

**SusanKl:** oh, I was coming up with some funnier names!

**SandraS:** Does everyone know where to find WordArt with MS Word?

**SusanKl:** yes

**JudyTh:** yep to word art

**HeatherBu** nods

**SusanKl:** on the drawing toolbar which is usually near the bottom of the screen

**SandraS:** I always stumble around till I find it...

**HeatherBu** . o O ( or Insert-->Picture-->WordArt )

**SandraS:** thanks, Heather

**SusanKl:** at least three ways to do anything in Microsoft Word

**FredK** . o O ( for sure )

**SusanKl:** I like your arrows Heather

**SandraS:** ok, so we're talking about using writing to learn...in any subject matter

**SandraS:** how about Art?

**SandraS:** writing to learn art?

**SusanKl:** who's he?

**JudyTh:** lol

**SandraS** snickers

**SusanKl** giggles

**FredK** ho ho

**JudyTh:** our art teacher has the students write about the art projects they create

**DavidWe** . o O ( Great children's' book: "Where's Art?" )

**HeatherBu** wonders...we're writing about my brother's godfather?

**SandraS** great idea, David

**JudyTh:** they just did paper mache (sp) masks, and the descriptions were amazing

**SandraS:** oh, cool, Judy

**DavidWe . o O** ( It IS a book already )

**SusanKI:** find a picture of an artist, type the artist's name in WordArt....then write about the artist?

**SandraS:** ooh, that's a way cool idea, Susan

**SandraS:** so with Judy'

**SandraS:** s example....

**FredK:** What about writing about wordless cartoons?

**SusanKI:** that would be fun!

**SandraS:** the students use writing to describe the art...another way of defining, telling, creating

**SandraS:** it's a form of reinforcement

**HeatherBu:** Fred, that ties in to our Social Studies requirements, interpreting political cartoons.

**SandraS:** oh, wow, Fred...that's a great idea!

**SandraS:** especially for literacy learning!

**FredK:** right

**SandraS:** you could extend that to any picture, actually

**SusanKI:** true...imagination is a wonderful thing

**JudyTh:** ahhh imagination

**SandraS:** why do y'all think that non-English teachers resist using writing to teach?

**FredK . o O** ( no life without it )

**JudyTh:** agrees with Fred

**SusanKI:** because they haven't practiced it enough themselves?

**HeatherBu:** Partly because they're scared of not meeting the E/LA teachers' standards?

**JudyTh:** getting away from books, where imagination begins

**SandraS:** those are pretty powerful reasons NOT to write, eh?

**SusanKl:** it's subjective rather than objective grading?

**SandraS:** another powerful reason

**JudyTh:** they think they have to grade it

**SusanKl:** lol

**FredK:** Not all students can live up to standards, but even those learning disabled need to write

**SandraS:** right, so a huge part of the challenge is to change the concept of what constitutes writing

**JudyTh:** writing to teach instead of teaching writing

**HeatherBu** wonders why teachers think everything students produce has to be assigned a grade

**SandraS:** and the traditional view still is, "If I put this comma in the wrong place, it's all wrong."

**JudyTh:** exactly heather

**JudyTh:** just let the students write for writing sake

**SandraS:** most folks think that writing is really what the last stage of any writing is...editing and proofreading

**SusanKl:** well, my students won't do it unless it counts.

**FredK:** Some students are particular about shape of letters, and miss the meaning.

**HeatherBu:** Unless they are having fun...or better yet, think they are getting away with something, Susan.

**SandraS** agrees with Heather

**SandraS:** There's a great exercise called note-passing

**SusanKI:** yes, I think this "ice-breaker" is a great idea for the first class session

**SandraS:** This can be used to discuss any reading

**SusanKI:** note-passing? that was forbidden when I went to school

**SandraS:** Students pair up...each student writes a note to the other about the reading...teacher calls time...students switch....then respond to each other

**SandraS:** precisely, Susan

**SandraS:** that's why students love it

**SusanKI:** yes, I can see that

**SandraS:** it seems forbidden, but they're learning as they write to each other

**SandraS:** it's helpful to go over possible things to say about the text

**SandraS:** but mostly the form...writing quickly

**SandraS:** passing the note

**SandraS:** responding...

**SandraS:** it gets students thinking

**JudyTh:** and expressing their thoughts in writing

**SandraS:** I also find that if I write with my students, then they don't worry so much if what they're doing counts...

**SandraS:** exactly, Judy

**HeatherBu** agrees with Sandra

**SandraS:** in other words, I am a writer among other writers

**SusanKI:** so, if they are not supposed to use chat, but are assigned this "note-passing" activity . . . online--in Chat...

**SandraS:** so any time I ask students to freewrite, I write, too

**FredK . o O** ( wish I could remember the name when the tutor writes the story told and reviews it with the student )

**SandraS:** ooh, that's a great idea, Susan

**SandraS:** can you explain, Fred?

**SandraS:** you mean the student tells the story, the tutor writes it, then goes over it with student?

**SusanKl:** there's a freedom in chat that supersedes other writing

**JudyTh:** interesting discussion, but I have church choir at 7:15

**JudyTh:** bye all

**SusanKl:** sorry Judy, bye!

**SandraS:** Thanks Judy

**HeatherBu:** Fred, I use that with my LD students, who are intimidated by trying to type and think at the same time.

**JudyTh** left the room (signed off).

**BJB2:** if you bring your students to the student campus they can use the private chat to pass notes that no one else will see

**SandraS:** enjoyed your comments!

**SandraS:** that's an important point, Heather

**SusanKl:** can I do that BJB???

**BJB2** . o O ( and you get a transcript when the students log out )

**SandraS:** typing can be a real impediment

**BJB2:** yes, Susan

**SusanKl:** may I invite them to my office?

**FredK:** for me too

**FredK:** Typing

**HeatherBu:** Yes, Sandra, but some of my students find it far easier to type than to use a pen/pencil and paper, also.

**BJB2:** Susan, you would have to create a group room in the student campus. It's a safe and secure place for K-12 students

**SusanKl:** I teach typing.

**SusanKl:** is there a fee?

**DavidWe:** TI is FREE

**BJB2:** nope

**SusanKl:** wow!

**SusanKl:** why I haven't I done it before?

**FredK:** wow

**DavidWe** hands Susan a bagel

**SusanKl:** thank you David...is it 7-grain? (like Sandra's)

**DavidWe:** It's a virtual bagel, Susan, so if you would like it to be...

**DavidWe** smiles

**SusanKl:** how about Community College students?

**DavidWe** nods

**DavidWe:** Them, too. Bring 'em all

**SusanKl:** oh, use my imagination....--> my bagel has chocolate on top!

**DavidWe** smiles

**SandraS** hands Susan the whip cream

**HeatherBu** wants one of Susan's bagels, please

**SusanKl:** yum yum! thank you, Sandra

**FredK:** Email helps with typing. But it hurts to watch the hunt and peck.

**SusanKl** passes Heather half of her bagel...the larger half!

**SandraS:** well, we're all using writing right now to learn...

**BJB2** agrees with Fred. But kids are more willing to do the hunt and peck method than actually write

**SandraS:** Tapped In is a great example of the power of writing

**HeatherBu** . o O ( thanks Susan...you are too kind! )

**SusanKl:** yes, it is....Tapped In is AWESOME!

**DavidWe** smiles

**FredK** I agree

**DavidWe** appreciates THAT writing

**SandraS** whistles, claps, jumps up and down

**SusanKl** giggles

**HeatherBu:** oops. yes ma'am

**SandraS:** ok, so how do we feel about ourselves as writers?

**SandraS** slowly works her way around to Heather's poetry....

**DavidWe** . o O ( Girls' night out? )

**HeatherBu** hides behind what's left of the bagel Susan so kindly shared

**FredK:** I struggle.

**SandraS:** nice try, Heather...

**DavidWe:** It's not THAT big, Heather

**SandraS:** I think if you look up "I struggle" in the dictionary, you'll see "writer" next to it

**BJB2:** Sandy, I'd also like to someday explore/compare text chat vs voice.

**SandraS:** oooh, that's a great idea...

**SusanKl:** I love to write; however, the subjects I teach are purely business: clear, concise, complete, and courteous

**BJB2:** I prefer text because I like to see the words

**SandraS:** in other words, Susan, you love to write non-business stuff

**FredK:** Do we need a mike?

**SandraS:** . o O ( does voice chat create text, too? )

**SusanKl:** but video is awesome, too!

**BJB2:** only for karaoke nights, Fred

**DavidWe:** It's possible to create text from voice

**HeatherBu:** and vice versa, David

**SandraS:** again, text from voice would be great for ESL, literacy, LD...

**DavidWe** nods

**SusanKl:** it is David? create text from voice? oh yes, Dragon speaking

**SandraS:** foreign language learning...

**DavidWe:** Speech recognition software, Dragon Dictate, etc.

**HeatherBu:** Susan, you can do it with just Win XP

**SusanKl:** yes, I do enjoy writing non-business stuff--not much opportunity these days.

**DavidWe:** . o O ( IBM used to market Via Voice )

**BJB2:** . o O ( sorry, I didn't mean to take you off topic, Sandy )

**SandraS:** nothing's off topic, BJ!

**SandraS:** it's an unexplored area

**DavidWe:** <http://www.nuance.com/viavoice/>

**FredK:** I have a British program called Lexing. The accent is different.

**SandraS:** really fascinating if you think about it...

**SandraS:** digital stories...

**SusanKl:** a British accent?

**SandraS:** voice, text, visual

**SusanKI:** that's one of our classes right now in the Master's!

**SandraS** would like her program with a New Zealand accent

**SandraS:** Susan, digital stories?

**SusanKI:** voice/text/visual

**SandraS:** oh, cool

**SandraS:** so we've got Susan, who loves to write

**SandraS:** Fred, who struggles

**SandraS:** Heather, who hides behind bagels

**SusanKI:** lol

**HeatherBu** grins

**SandraS:** Sandy, who loves to write and struggles

**SandraS:** and is a perfectionist

**SusanKI:** did you get whipped cream on your nose while hiding, Heather?

**SandraS:** we're just about out of time....

**DavidWe** . o O ( Skateboard Girl is a perfectionist? )

**SandraS:** but my point

**SandraS:** is that if we have this variety of self-perception as writers

**SusanKI:** "Skateboard Girl?"

**DavidWe** smiles

**HeatherBu** grabs a napkin, just in case

**SandraS:** think what our students think of themselves as writers...

**FredK** hopes so

**SusanKl:** sad thought

**SandraS:** Hoverboard girl, thank you very much

**DavidWe:** Sandra have you heard of Fablevision - [www.fablevision.com](http://www.fablevision.com) ?

**SandraS:** nope...

**SandraS:** what is it David?

**SusanKl:** and I just required a research paper!

**DavidWe:** Presentation last night - creating digital events out of stories - excellent discussion last night

**DavidWe:** I'm not sure exactly what they do, but that's the web site.

**BJB2** agrees with David [www.fablevision.com](http://www.fablevision.com)

**SandraS:** I'll check it out...thanks for website

**SusanKl:** Gee, this was tons of fun!!!!

**SandraS:** if you want to join WriteTalk, you can post any ideas there

**DavidWe:** Paul Reynolds (PaulR) is a student with Pepperdine's Online Ed. Tech program

**SandraS:** share writing

**SusanKl:** wonderful to meet all of you!

**SandraS:** share teaching questions...anything

**SandraS:** Thanks to all of you!

**DavidWe** bows humbly

**FredK** . o O ( neat discussion )

**SandraS:** I had a great time talking

**DavidWe:** Thank you, Sandra

**BJB2** hugs Sandy. Thanks for a delightful discussion.

**HeatherBu:** thank you, Sandra.

**SusanKl** curtsies

**SandraS** bows to BJ

**SandraS** admires Susan's curtsey

**BJB2** waves goodnight. Sandy, I'll send you a transcript of the fablevision discussion

**FredK** thinks about what we have discussed

**SandraS:** Thanks, BJ! That would be great.

**SusanKl** thinks a skirt works better for a curtsey, but shorts will have to do!

**DavidWe** thinks Sandra will enjoy THAT transcript

**FredK:** LOL

**SusanKl:** 90+ degrees here!

**SandraS** jumps on her hoverboard and whooshes off yelling, "Have a great evening!"

**DavidWe:** Where?

**SusanKl:** Tootles!

**DavidWe** waves to Hoverboard girl

**SandraS** left the room (signed off).

**SusanKl:** bye bye

**DavidWe** waves bye

**FredK:** Bye

**SusanKl** can't wait to get this transcript!

**DavidWe** heads back to Reception

**DavidWe:** Logout sooner, then, Susan

**DavidWe** smiles

**DavidWe** waves

**HeatherBu** waves bye

**DavidWe** left the room.

**FredK** left the room.

**SusanKI**: made me giggle David!

**HeatherBu**: BJ, I think the Blitz prompts would be great for the Festival